114 before and subsequent visits by the Venezuelan explorers Cardona and Heny,
101 but none of these men published an account of the discovery, as far as I know.[7]
Undoubtedly some unlettered Venezuelans had visited the region even earlier,
but the wanderings of such individuals do not result in discovery in any true
sense. Wandering Kamarakotos had also discovered Venezuela by that time,
but this did not lead to Venezuela's discovering them. The expedition to which
I was attached in 1939, as specified below, was the first to devote any attention
specifically to the Indians and it may be said that virtually nothing of any par-
ticular value has been published about them before the present monograph.

173 The Indians themselves have short memories, practically no time sense,
and extremely scanty historical legends. Nevertheless, a few scraps of histori-
cal information, evidently thoroughly unreliable, were gathered from them.
In the last part of the myth of Maichak, published on a later page, they repre-
sent themselves as being the descendants or successors of a man named Kama-
rakoto who lived in Kamarata, their present home, and whose gigantic "petri-
fied remains" still exist there. This myth is the usual answer to any question
as to where they came from, and it includes no hint of their ever having re-
sided elsewhere. There is, however, a second and less miraculous legend that
is known to fewer members of the tribe and that has more the ring of historic
possibility, although I would place no definite reliance on it either. According
to this legend the original Kamarakotos were the descendants of an Indian
(presumably with his family) who fled from the region of Tumeremo in the days
of the conquistadores. Ideas of geography being vague, "the region of
Tumeremo" may mean almost anywhere in the area, far to the north and east
of Kamarata, between the Caroní, the Cuyuní, and the Sierra Imataca. There
were Catalán Capuchin missions in this region and to this extent the legend
● [805] curiously agrees with the statement of Fray Ramón Bueno. "In the days of the
conquistadores" may mean almost any time more than two generations ago.
It was before the time of the father of anyone now living and beyond that dating
is of no value. These "original Kamarakotos" are said by the legend later to
have been joined by a man from Luepa. The "man" may be taken to repre-
sent a whole family or even a general population drift such as is still going on,
and "from Luepa," as was noticed also in other connections, means not spe-
cifically from that settlement, which had no importance until a mission was
recently established there, but simply from the Gran Sabana or even from
[101] farther eastward through the Gran Sabana. The descendants of this man are
said to have intermarried with those of "the man from Tumeremo" and the
present Kamarakotos are said to be the resultant mixed group. The "ancient"
or "real" Kamarakotos, i.e. those said to have come from Tumeremo, are
further said to have had a different language, and a few scraps of this are even
remembered, as given on a later page.

7 [see footnote on p. 305, category 116 – Analyst]

874 262
451. Green-shelled, forest form — warwoto.
452. Yellow-shelled, stream-bank form — abíra.
453. Very long, green variety — maipa.
454. Maripa (Maximiliana) fruit — aba'.
455. Small, round, yellow fruit, not identified — madɛ.
(Numbers 180, 181, 182, 183, 189, 190, 191, and 192 are also plants, listed elsewhere in connection with their uses.)

Nature, Time.

*192 *197 821
456. *Sun — be. Taurepán, wüi, wei.
457. *Moon — Kapui. Taurepán, Kapui.
458. Dawn — auyukana.
459. Day — bene (from be, "sun," but be above is apparently used also to mean "day" and the word bene, produced out of context and after long cogitation by my informant, is doubtful, it may mean "during the day").
460. *Night — warbə. Taurepán, wargə. (Koch-Grünberg) wa:lupə.
461. *Cloud — katuri'. Taurepán, katu'ru'.
462. *Shy — ka'. Taurepán, ka'.
463. *Wind — iroma. Taurepán, iroma.
464. *Rain — kono'. Taurepán, kono'.
*192 465. Earth, clay, mud — non.
*197 823 466. *Precious metal, silver (or sometimes gold) — pun. I could not distinguish this word phonetically from that for "meat," nor do I find it in allied dialects practically all of which use the Spanish "plata."
467. *Gold — oro, woro'. This is the Spanish "oro," of which woro' appears to be only a particularly "Kamarakotized" pronunciation. There is a Carib root for "gold," cf. Makuchi (Williams) karu-kari, but my Kamarakoto informants always used the Spanish word.
*192 *197 821 468. *Dry season — tolongan. Taurepán (Koch-Grünberg) wei-yayenesa' (wei = "sun"). See next word.
469. *Rainy season — ipukupə. Taurepán (Koch-Grünberg) kono-yayenesa' (kono' = "rain"). I have been unable to find any sure cognates of the Kamarakoto words for the seasons or to trace their derivation. This one appears to be a verbal form.
*192 470. *Today — tsiredau. Taurepán (Koch-Grünberg) seleuale.
*197 471. *Yesterday — koɛmiyau. Taurepán (Koch-Grünberg) kooméya'.
● 805 472. *Tomorrow — penane. Taurepán (Koch-Grünberg) penane.

*192 473. Knotted cord for measuring time — bekūi' or bekwi' (pronunciation apparently constant but last syllable so short that sounds were not exactly distinguished).

There are no words for month (counted by moons, if at all), year (counted by rainy seasons, if at all), or direction of the compass (expressed as toward or away from a known place or simply by pointing).

Adjectives.

*192 a. Color. Exhaustive enquiry failed to produce more than six color words and
*197 of these those for "blue" and "green" were only obtained after long discussion
822 and argument among several women. These women were unable to describe
124 the color of objects shown them that were purple, orange, and brown, except by reference to the nearest color listed below.

474. 'White — ametun. Taurepán (Koch-Grünberg) aemutun.

475. 'Black — (ta)rikutun. Taurepán (Koch-Grünberg) leikutun.

476. 'Red — chayu. Taurepán (Koch-Grünberg) zhu:yu (zh intended to be like French j, but probably nearly or quite unvoiced, pronounced about like shu:yu).

477. 'Yellow — chukupiyu. Taurepán (Koch-Grünberg) zukubiyu.

478. 'Blue — irouribaru. Taurepán (Koch-Grünberg) ro:liua (possibly = rouriwa?). Makuchi (Williams) ror-ri-wa, "green or light blue."

479. 'Green — chenan. Taurepán (Koch-Grünberg) lo:ra (also given for "blue"). Most Caribs apparently do not distinguish green from blue and I suspect this word of being a makeshift produced to please me. The only hint of a cognate word that I have found, and this poor, is in Aparai (Coudreau cited by de Goeje) chinoucoutoume, "dark, black" in which -coutoume is cognate with -kutun, "black," and chinou remotely suggests chenan.

*192 b. Other adjectives.

480. Good, pretty — wakō, wakōrə. "Handsome man" — wakōr warato moine.

481. Bad, ugly — alwarə.

482. Handsome, pretty — amanon.

483. Hot — ikōyin, ikōina.

484. Cold — komi'.

485. Strong — merundə.

486. Weak — apaumun.

487. Sick — ene:(pe)

Vital Statistics

163 I was able to obtain reasonably reliable information on the families of 19 women. They had had 79 children, an average of about 4 per woman, and of these 46 were living and 33 dead. Most of these women were still bearing children, so that the average number of children per woman must be higher. 165 Only 3 women for whom reliable information was available could be considered as definitely past child-bearing — a significant fact in itself as showing how few women survive this period. These 3 had had 21 children, or an average of 7 apiece, which is probably somewhat above the tribal average as these women lived longer than most do. The average number of children per woman who reaches maturity may be estimated at about 5, or possibly a little more.

165 Over 40% of the children born to women now living are already dead. Practically all of them died before reaching maturity. As many of the surviving children are still young infants, it is certain that many of them will die before they are mature. Of the 21 children born to the 3 women past child-bearing, 14 are dead, 67%. From these figures it is reasonable to estimate that 50% of the children born into this tribe die before reaching maturity.

162 Of the 46 living children involved in this tabulation, 25 are males and 21 females. Definite information as to sex could be obtained for only 20 of the 33 dead children and these included 9 males and 11 females. These figures do not demonstrate any probable departure from a sex ratio of approximately 1:1 or any correlation of infant mortality with sex.

125 162 163 In all 23 females were personally recorded in detail and about 25 more were observed or were recorded from information given by husbands or other close relatives. These include all ages from birth to senility and it is significant that only two women were observed who were definitely mature sexually and who had not had any children. One of these, although sexually mature, was very young and not considered marriageable. The other was having her first pregnancy. It can thus be concluded that essentially 100% of the females 589 who reach maturity are fertile and do have children. There is, on the other hand, a considerable group of young men who are sexually mature and are as old as women who have children but who are not married and disclaim having any children, an inevitable result in a polygamous society and one of which the significance will be discussed later.

162 No Kamarakoto knows his own age or the ages of his children and it is 165 impossible to estimate these more closely than within 10 to 20%. There are, 165 however, extremely few members of the tribe who can be called old. Certain- 824 ly not more than 15% of the mature women are past child-bearing, probably not over 10%, and it can be roughly estimated that probably not more than 20 people in the tribe are over 45 years of age. We encountered and heard of none 165 whose age could reasonably be estimated at more than about 60. The tribe thus

764 Although the body thus came to be left in the grave, no attempt was
177 made to mark or maintain the site until very recently. Now a cross is sometimes erected — there are two in the cemetery at Uruyén and one grave (a prone burial) has a light cane railing around three sides. These are evident attempts to copy burials seen in Venezuelan villages, as reported by the two or three traveled individuals who have seen them. Of course no inscriptions are
769 used and no care is taken of the plots. There is no cult of the dead and no offerings are placed on the grave.

Notions of Time

●805 The few relatively sophisticated, Spanish-speaking Indians are aware of
[177] the European calendar and system of reckoning time and will sometimes speak of months, hours, and other decidedly non-Kamarakoto concepts. It is evident, however, that even they have no definite means of telling what time it is and do not accurately know the hour or month or date. These foreign concepts are as yet quite unknown to the bulk of the tribe and of no practical use to the few who realize that they exist. The Kamarakotos have no definite time system. They recognize and designate the time of day by the height of the sun, and speak of dawn, morning, evening, early or late in the day, and so on, as we do when deprived of timepieces, but have no fixed subdivisions of the day. They reckon days for rather short intervals that are important to them, but keep no permanent or continuous record. They seem, for instance, to have no idea of how many days there are in a year and usually are quite unable to tell how many days have elapsed since an event more than a week or two in the past.

There is probably no recognized unit between the day and the year. Our interpreter spoke sometimes of months, but I could not observe that the Indians really kept any track of the phases of the moon or used them to reckon time, although I might be mistaken in this. They do, of course, recognize the year as a succession of one rainy and one dry season and within each of their two
[82] seasons they are usually well aware of relative position. For instance, they can predict rather accurately when the season is due to change and they know at about what time various fruits will ripen, flowers bloom, birds lay eggs, and so on. No continuous record of years is kept and there is almost no perception of long spans of elapsed time beyond such expressions as "when I was young," "in my father's time," "when so-and-so built his house," and so forth. No Kamarakoto has any real idea of his own age or of that of his children. Even for young children the birth of whom was still vividly in mind, statements regarding age were often manifestly absurd.

In summary, the Kamarakotos appear to be about as completely devoid of any chronological sense, system, terminology or records as rational beings can be.

805 211 There arise, however, occasions when an exact count of days is absolutely essential, and then recourse is had to a primitive type of reckoning string, which interestingly shows the first step in the development of the complex quipus of the Andine peoples. The Kamarakoto quipu consists of a cord, usually a piece of cotton twine, which is knotted. There is no difference between the various knots and each represents one day. This is used in two ways, subtractive and additive. In the first case the purpose is to record the amount of time that is to elapse before an expected event, such as return from a journey or maturing of a batch of kachiri. A knot is then tied to represent each day that is to elapse, and as each day passes one knot is untied. When the last knot is untied, the day for the expected event has arrived. In the additive system, the quipu starts as an unknotted string and a knot is put in as each day to be reckoned elapses, so that when complete the quipu's knots give the number of days that have passed. This system is used, for instance, to reckon the length of journeys (not the time to be allowed for completing them as in the other system) or the number of days worked — some of our workmen presented quipus as their tally against which they were to be paid. This method has the potentiality of developing into a permanent and continuous calendar record, but has not progressed nearly to this point. Once the short span of perhaps at most fifteen or twenty days has elapsed, the record is discontinued and the quipu discarded.

805 211 574 Subtractive quipus also serve as invitations. A man who plans to give a dance or other social enterprise will estimate how many days of preparation are necessary and how many guests he can accommodate. He will then knot this number of days into a quipu for each guest and one for himself and distribute the quipus to the persons invited, accompanied by a verbal message as to the nature and place of the occasion. Each person concerned unties a knot each day, and when the last knot is untied the company assembles. Such invitation quipus are often to be seen hanging from the beams inside houses.

171 211 Nordenskiöld (1930, Map 3) has shown that quipus in general occur throughout the Andes and north of the Amazon in South America and as far north as British Columbia in North America. Day-reckoning quipus occur among most relatives of the Kamarakotos, including the Taurepánes (Koch-Grünberg), Akawais (im Thurn), Kalíñas (Hildebrand), and others, but it is not always clear whether additive or subtractive.

802 The related concepts of number are adequately summarized in the vocabulary on a previous page. 7/A

Dances and Amusements

223 574 The favorite and most typical diversion of the Kamarakotos is a drinking party, etaripan. The host prepares a large amount of kachiri or paiba and invites

7/A [see pp. 29-31, category 116 - Analyst]

[539] [584] [583] marriage and the extravagant labors involved are obviously an exaggerated form of wife-purchase by personal service.

[825] 203. An "ancoreta," oimi in Kamarakoto.

[805] 204. Here and in many other places the expression of time in hours is from Antonio's Spanish and is his expression of equivalent but, of course, differently and more vaguely expressed times in the Indian version, as the Indians do not use the hour as a unit of time.

205. Another parenthetical comment with no actual bearing on the story at this point.

[342] 206. The difficulty is that the first step in building a house is to sink the uprights into the ground and this cannot be done in rock.

[342] 207. The specification of four posts seems to imply that a quadrangular shelter is intended.

[352] 208. murei. It is odd that the difficulty in the ensuing work is not the material, stone (never really used for benches), but the pattern. The stone-work of the termite is no more eccentric than the earlier stone-boring of a worm, but in the earlier case it was the stone that caused the difficulty.

[825] 209. muna^{9}.

[825] 210. A kurĩnata.

[825] 211. An enwara^{9}, a spiny rock-lizard. Not as part of this story but as another legend, I was told that enwara^{9} (then the personal name of this particular lizard and now the term for all lizards of this species) was turned into stone at the time of the earthquake (below) and this stone gives its name to Enwarapaimã-tepũi, south of Kamarata.

[824] 212. A "ceibo," asarɛ-yɛ^{7}. The fall of this tree is another apparently wholly irrelevant detail, as is Maichak's refusal to jump.

213. pangai^{9}. These are not normally used for fishing.

214. This was offered as an aside. The etymology is not worthy of serious consideration.